

had had the proper assistance, there would not have been this accumulation and things would have gone along much more smoothly.

I am going to give the particulars of another one of these cases with which I had to deal. Perhaps the Minister of Agriculture gets the odd anonymous letter; I am sure the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) does, and I know I have had a few. I got one not long ago which started out by saying, "You—" and then used a word in the singular that is not parliamentary. The writer went on to tell me what would happen if I did not get some of these cases straightened out for these boys who had been called up. This letter was from a farmer. It had been mailed along the main line. I read through the letter and then down about the fourth paragraph he said, "You so-and-so"—using the same word in the plural—and he referred to Gardiner, Patterson and Perley, and told me what was going to happen to us if such and such a thing was not done. Well, it does not worry me very much. But just for a lark I took this letter across the street to a Liberal friend of mine—the Minister of Agriculture knows him very well. I showed him the letter and he asked, "What are you going to do about it?" I said, "There is nothing I can do about it, but if I could answer it this is what I would say: I do not mind being called what you called me in the first paragraph, Mr. So-and-so, but I do object when you get down to the fourth paragraph associating me with the Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Patterson, because that is their mess, not mine." That is just in passing.

The Minister of Agriculture has announced a policy of more production—and that with less or at least no more man-power. A list was put on *Hansard* the other day by the hon. member for Haldimand (Mr. Senn) showing the increased production asked for in dairy products, cattle, beef, and so on, ranging all the way from increases of seven to sixty per cent. I am sure the farmers are willing to give increased production. They have done pretty well in trying to meet all the demands that have been made upon them by the Minister of Agriculture, but surely he must realize that this increased production of hogs, dairy products and beef that he asks for means that more labour will be required on the farm. It is not there, and the labour question presents some difficulty.

I have under my hand the report of a speech which the Minister of Agriculture delivered in Saskatoon recently. The report appears in the *Western Producer* of January 21, and it reports the minister as saying that the labour lag will not hamper food production.

[Mr. Perley.]

The minister went on in that speech to give details of the greater production goals required. But he left the labour situation just as it is. The farmers will do their best; nevertheless it is going to be almost impossible for them, with the present labour situation, to meet these increased production goals asked for.

Yesterday the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid), the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Ross) and the hon. member for Peterborough West (Mr. Fraser) urged the appointment of a food ministry and suggested the Minister of Agriculture as the new minister of food. I have no objection to that because if anyone in the present cabinet is to be appointed to that post I think the Minister of Agriculture is possibly the one. Measure him from the chin up and you will find he will measure up with any other member of this House of Commons. He has the ability, if he would only apply it. But even if we give him all the credit that is his due, he cannot do it all. This question of food production is not a new one. A food ministry was advocated by the Canadian federation of agriculture a few days ago. I myself, speaking in this house on February 3 of last year, as reported at page 264 of *Hansard*, dealt with this very question. I spoke of the two fronts on which we were fighting, the economic and the military, and then I made a plea for a parity of prices for farm products with the products of other industries. I said:

We want a parity of prices with the products of other industries which the farmer has to buy in order to carry on his business.

Then listen to this. I went on to say:

After twenty-two and a half months, I think we should have what I would term a food production board to give direction.

I suggested this as long ago as February last—a food production board to give direction to the ministry. I went on to say:

Represented on that board should be farmers and others, who would direct in the production of different commodities.

I said that a year ago, and what I say now is that the suggestion I made then will have to be accepted, because the Minister of Agriculture cannot do it all and must depend upon advisers. On that board there should be representatives of agriculture, representatives of the Canadian federation of agriculture, and I believe we should also have on that board representatives of the retail merchants of Canada. I know many retail merchants in my part of the country who are almost "nuts" because they simply cannot carry out all the various orders issued by the wartime prices and trade board and the rationing administra-